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Copy, Imitation, Forgery as an Artistic Principle in the Novel *Chatterton* by Peter Ackroyd

Kopie, imitace, padělek coby umělecký prostředek v románu *Chatterton* od Petera Ackroyda

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vedoucí práce: Louis Armand, PhD

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a pouze na základě uvedených pramenů a literatury.

V Praze, dne 20. 8 2010.

I declare that the following BA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned.

Prague, 20 August 2010

My thanks to Louis Armand, PhD, for his advice and patience.

Souhlasím se zapůjčením bakalářské práce ke studijním účelům.

I have no objections to the BA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

Shrnutí

Práce se zabývá různými druhy opakování, které je možno v neobyčejně hojné míře pozorovat v románu *Chatterton* od britského prozaika Petera Ackroyda, a to v nejrůznějších rovinách knihy: v tematickém a motivickém plánu, struktuře textu i rovině metatextové. Konkrétně jde například o opakování určitých motivů, případně citace a narážky. Různé druhy opakování jsou v úvodní kapitole nejprve popsány, aby mohly být co nejpřesněji rozlišeny jeden od druhého, jakož i vztaženy k pasážím z románu, v nichž se vyskytují. Takováto opatrnost je na místě obzvlášť z toho důvodu, že angličtina rozlišuje mezi třemi výrazy pro padělatelství, a sice „to counterfeit" – padělat něco tak, aby byl výsledek co možná nejpodobnější originálu, „to forge" – padělat něco tak, že si autor nejprve vymyslí fiktivního autora padělku anebo napodobí styl autora skutečného a stvoří další z „jeho" děl. Poslední z výrazů, kterými je v angličtině možno označit činnost padělatelství je „to plagiarise," kdy se již padělatel neskrývá v cizí identitě, ale veřejně si přivlastňuje díla druhých.

Práce dále popisuje, jak princip opakování pomáhá vytvářet intertextuální dimenzi Ackroydova románu, který se vztahuje nejenom k mnoha textům literární a filosofické tradice, ale také sám k sobě. Pro jasnější orientaci v problému je uvedena základní terminologie týkající se fenoménu intertextuality.

Román je dále představen jako dílo přináležející k žánru metafikce. Hlavní vlastností tohoto žánru je skutečnost, že vystavuje na odiv svoji fikční povahu, kterou zdůrazňuje například právě jeho výrazná napojenost na jiné literární texty a, obecně vzato, princip opakování. Drtivá většina opakujících se elementů spadá do sféry umělecké reprezentace: opakovaně se vyskytují a padělají malby a opakovaně se vyslovují narážky na literární autory. Tyto opakující se elementy odrážejí knihu jako celek a neustále tak připomínají, že i ona je „pouze" uměleckou reprezentací, jež se intertextuálně vztahuje k mnoha dalším. Ackroyd ke

zdůraznění fikční povahy své knihy používá i mimoliterárních prostředků. Nalézáme je ve způsobu, jakým je román strukturován. Román *Chatterton* například uvádí pasáž, jež se v mnohém podobá operní předehře, a jednu část knihy zase prokládají vizuálně zvýrazněné fragmenty citací, které se na konci každé kapitoly spojí dohromady.

Coby metafikce je Ackroydův román postaven do opozice vůči realismu jak literárnímu, tak jeho myšlenkové bázi spočívající především ve víře v lidskou schopnost objektivně uchopit realitu. Zdůrazněním své fikční povahy se *Chatterton* právě vůči tomuto přesvědčení ostře vymezuje. Mnohost vizuálních a textových reprezentací, které román obsahuje, odkrývá fikčnost, či spíše zkonstruovanost, nejen literatury, ale rovněž například minulosti. Patrná je zejména na příkladu centrální postavy knihy, básníka Thomas Chattertona, kterého v dalších časových rovinách románu napodobují dvě postavy. Je ovšem zdůrazněno, že jelikož obě žijí v jiných stoletích, ani jedna nemůže imitovat přímo jeho, ale pouze existující reprezentace Chattertona: básně, jimiž ho oslavovali jeho následovníci, a především portrét od malíře Henriho Wallise, jenž má v románu významnou úlohu. Práce v této souvislosti stručně představuje uplatnění takzvaného „narativního paradigmatu“ v oblasti historie, které (zjednodušeně řečeno) nahlíží minulost jako textový produkt, nikoli nepodobný literárnímu textu.

Téma opakování přirozeně vede k zamyšlení nad svým opakem, a sice tématem originality a autenticity, které v románu nachází živnou půdu především ve spojení s uměleckou tvorbou. Práce se tak zabývá také (sebe)vnímáním umělce a aplikuje druhy umělecké představivosti popsané S. T. Coleridgem na Ackroydův román.

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1. Repetition and its Subtypes

1. 1 introduction

In his *Notes on a New Culture* Peter Ackroyd gives the reader, among other things, an interpretation of the genealogy of modernity, ranging from the 17th to the 20th century. Ackroyd states that in the seventeenth century a new language, that is a new system of values and a new way of perception, emerged:

> The new language is to name Reason (...). What is continuous, plain, familiar, simple, solid, sensible: this is the family of concepts which initiated the modern movement in England. It is only necessary to consider their antonyms to realize the force of what has been banished by the new dispensation of language.[1]

This thesis aims to deal with the aesthetic and cognitive value of repetition in Peter Ackroyd's novel *Chatterton*. As J. Hillis Miller states, 'Any novel is a complex tissue of repetitions, and of repetitions within repetitions, or of repetitions linked in chain fashion to other repetitions.'[2] Moreover, to use a succession of recurrences in a work of literature is just one way how to create meaning, to emphasise something. Nevertheless, as regards *Chatterton*, repetition represents its all pervading theme and a structural as well as a stylistic device. What is especially important, through the use of repetition the novel manifests that it is conscious not only of itself, but also other literary texts, including some by Ackroyd

[1] Peter Ackroyd, *Notes for a New Culture: An Essay on Modernism* (London: Vision Press Limited, 1976) 13.
[2] J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982) 2-3.

himself. As a specimen of metafiction it 'explicitly and overtly lays bare its condition of artifice, and (...) thereby explores the problematic relationship between life and fiction.'[3]

The antonym of the repeated or derivative is naturally the original. Do the two poles of this opposition, as presented in *Chatterton*, completely exclude each other from their respective spheres – as the concepts Ackroyd finds at the foundations of the modern movement and their antonyms do? Is the 'meaning of both words (...) produced by their structural relationship of difference [?]'[4] Ackroyd's proposal to consider the concepts and their antonyms ultimately leads to the poststructuralist-like disclosure of these binary oppositions being mere products of arbitrary cultural conventions.[5] Correspondingly, while examining the terms of copy, counterfeit and others in the novel, in the course of the thesis it will be asserted that a clear opposition between "the original" and "the derivative" is rather hard to maintain, and suggested why it is so.

What is here discussed merely as "repetition" also represents a superordinate for various instances of copy, imitation, quotation, counterfeit, forgery, or plagiarism one encounters in *Chatterton*. Before the beginning of exploring the usage of these concepts in Ackroyd's *Chatterton*, it is necessary to introduce them, look more closely at their established meanings as well as at how they frequently overlap. Moreover, in order to explore repetition thoroughly, also its opposite should be discussed.

1. 2 original

The word has its origin in Latin *orīgō* that signifies "beginning" or "source;" it comes from the stem *orīrī*, meaning "to rise, become visible, appear."[6] It is interesting to note that the

[3] Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001) 4.
[4] Pam Morris, *Realism* (London, NY: Routledge, 2003) 25.
[5] K. K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge and Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 65.
[6] "Original," *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 1st ed., 1966.

first reference to the word can be found in the phrase "the original sin;"[7] "original" thus used to have radically negative connotations, 'profoundly tainted by and indeed implicated in the Fall.'[8] Another disastrous origin that could be mentioned is the creation of the world according to the Gnostic tradition, whose syncretic nature made it adopt the basic Platonic notion of a transcendent ideal and its double of little worth, which can never achieve the qualities of the ideal. According to the Gnostic tradition, there is a good God, but 'The world is not his work, but that of a subordinate being.'[9] Such a world is imperfect, crooked and unjust; in short, it represents a mere deception, as Rudolph points out.[10]

The residua of pejorative overtones stuck to "the original" even later on, and involved also more conservative cultural movements. Since the times of Plato, the European culture has intermittently questioned what claimed to be original and at the same time belonged to the earthly sphere. Thus it was for example possible for Samuel Johnson to define the "original" as 'first copy.'[11]

However, numerous social phenomena undermining the individual's position in the world led to the corresponding desire to reassert one's individuality with new firmness, and to the increasingly more prominent appreciation of the original, which was thus disposed of its associations with sin. The disintegration of the medieval social order and urbanisation made the life suddenly much less secure. Voyages of discovery provided that Europeans had to face with new versions of "the Other,"[12] which helped to initiate the concerns about what their own authentic culture consists in. Last but not least, the spread of Protestantism triggered the spread of the notion that it is the individual, and his or her genuine religious experience, which is responsible for their salvation.

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[7] "Original," *Etymological Dictionary of Modern English,* 1st ed., 1921.
[8] Groom 6.
[9] Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: the Nature and History of Gnosticism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd, 1998) 62.
[10] Rudolph 69.
[11] "Original," *Dictionary of the English Language*, 10th ed., 1849.
[12] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978) 1.

In his *Culture and Authenticity* Charles Lindholm[13] refers to Lionel Trilling's conviction that the urge for authenticity evolved from the initial need for the trait of "sincerity" within the competitive urban society or in the importance of one's sincere moral consciousness and religious experience.

The legacy of Platonic notions as regards the imitation and originality can be perceived even in the Romantic period, the authors of which were considered and praised as true *orīginēs*, embodying 'the immediacy and spontaneity of poetic creation.'[14] On the other hand, the source of a Romantic author's creative capability at least partially lies if not in the world of ideas, then beyond himself, which is manifested especially in the fact that he is not fully in control of the creative process. As Andrew Bennett states, 'There is no reason why the [Romantic] genius is able to create the works that he creates.'[15] Last but not least, as an extreme example of the fact that the Platonic notions regarding the imitation and originality were relevant even for the Romantic period is the following distinction between "original" and "imitation" by Edward Young: '*Imitations* are of two kinds; one of Nature, one of Authors: The first we call *Originals*, and confine the term *Imitation* to the second.'[16]

What was just mentioned does not strictly apply to all the Romantics, though; S. T. Coleridge, for instance, emphasises the element of will in the process of artistic creation. However, it appears to be rather the matter of the "secondary" than "primary" imagination, both representing the concepts quite relevant for the discussion of the original and derivative. For Coleridge the supreme kind of imagination is the primary one, an echo of divine power within the artist's soul: 'the living power and prime agent of all human perception, (...) the repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.' The secondary

[13] Charles Lindholm, *Culture and Authenticity* (Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) 3.
[14] Andrew Bennet, *The Author* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) 62.
[15] Bennett 60.
[16] Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition: In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison.* (London: A Millar, 1759) 9-10.

imagination on the other hand 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate,'[17] which clearly implies a will having a particular intention, but incapable of producing the material for subsequent dissolving, diffusing and dissipating out of itself.

Romantic thinkers often stressed the natural character of the original as opposed to the mechanically produced copy. Edward Young states that 'An *Original* may be said to be of a *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of Genius; it *grows*, it is not *made* (...).'[18] As M. H. Abrams sums up when discussing Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, such an "organic" view of originality considers the work of art and literature analogously to a plant. They both have their origin in the "seed" (the poet's mind); they grow, yet not out of nothingness: 'The plant assimilates to its substance the alien and diverse elements of earth, air, light, and water.'[19] Moreover, the plant (work of art) "evolves spontaneously from internal source of energy"[20] and its whole is supposed to represent an organic unity.

On the basis of what has been discussed above, it appears that the Romantics associated the notion of origin, among other things, with nature, purity and wholeness. All these concepts reached their point of heightened idealisation by artists and thinkers. As for nature, let us consider the proliferation of pastorals – whose beginning dates back to Hellenistic Greece – depicting 'the Shepherd's sweet lot,'[21] and the adoration of the "noble savages" and peoples of newly discovered lands, representing the 'coherent and pristine rural cultural tradition, integrated with nature, unashamed, communal loving, and close to the paradisical Garden of Eden.'[22]

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[17] S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria, or Biographical Sketches, or my Literary Life and Opinions*; *Volume I*, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge (New York: William Gowans, 1852) 378.
[18] Young 12.
[19] M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958) 171.
[20] Abrams 172.
[21] William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*, ed. Philip Smith (Mineola, N. Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 1992) 4.
[22] Lindholm 5.

The interest in folk traditions, having become truly popular in England following the publication of James Macpherson's *Ossian*, may be considered in the same context. Folk traditions as a source of originality were very much connected with the genuine purity the country and its people were supposedly endowed with. As Hillel Schwartz sums up, folk traditions represent 'the protean re-source from whom comes the lore of authenticity and the illusion of innocence.'[23]

A prime emblem of innocence and purity naturally appears to be the child and childhood. Especially enthusiastic adoration of childhood can be perceived in the works of the first generation of English Romantic authors. For example, the already quoted *Songs of Innocence* provide one, apart from pastoral images, with many exaltations of childhood – namely the poem "Infant Joy." Blake's younger contemporary William Wordsworth named a whole section of his anthology[24] from 1815 "Poems referring to the period of childhood."

The child is one of the most frequently recurrent motives in *Chatterton*, but rather than with the idea of origin, it is connected with imitation. The boy called Tom young Chatterton encounters in front of a ruined building mirrors the poet, and also reappears in a painting one of the novel's characters intends to buy. Edward, the son of Charles Wychwood, who is the main character of the novel, resembles Charles to the extent that his mother 'could see the lineaments of Charles's face,' in that of Edward; 'her husband was dead and yet he was not dead'[25] for her. Moreover, Mr. Joynson, who owns the memoirs supposedly written by Chatterton after he staged his death, is as short as a child and even has quite a childish way of behaviour, interrupting a normal conversation casually with things like 'You can read my mind and we should start an act together at the Alhambra, me in ballet shoes with a gag over

[23] Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture and the Copy* (New York: Zone Books, 1996) 373.
[24] William Wordsworth, *Poems by William Wordsworth: including Lyrical Ballads, and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author with Additional Poems, a New Preface, and Supplementary Essays* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1815).
[25] Peter Ackroyd, *Chatterton* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987) 181.

my mouth and you with a whip.'[26] The memoirs were secretly given to Charles by Joynson's friend. In the end of the novel Joynson announces that they are faked.

Last but not least, let us note that the boyhood of Thomas Chatterton – who died at the age of seventeen – represents one of the traits subsequent generations of writers stressed about him most, which, considering also Chatterton's end, made him more and more romanticised. His image became loaded with 'Wordsworth's "marvellous boy," Coleridge's "spirit blest," Keats's "child of sorrow," de Vigny's *poète maudit*, Oscar Wilde's "pure artist."'[27] Peter Ackroyd carefully rids Chatteron's youth of such pathos by, among other things, presenting the reader a boy vehemently trying to behave as an adult, and after his accidental encounter with a backward child realising how immature he virtually is: 'For a moment, as he looks at the boy, it is as if he were looking at himself.'[28]

As the last from the above-mentioned notions Romantic authors ascribed to the idea of origin, *wholeness* was mentioned. A few areas that were supposed to embody a true origin were already touched upon: nature, old folk traditions and childhood. What might correspond to the idea of wholeness is the increased interest in the past, manifested for example in the eighteenth century antiquarianism. It seems possible to grasp the past, to evaluate it and interpret – it is finished. On the basis of such a view one might reject or glorify a particular period.

On the other hand, Ackroyd by no means considers the past something to which one could assign a definite interpretation or evaluation; his attitude stems from a specific perception of history that is to be encountered in *Chatterton*, and further elaborated in one of the next chapters. When commenting on the intertwining three time levels on the novel Brian Finney characterises it as follows: 'The past resolves itself into a series of texts which

[26] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 221.
[27] Brian Finney, "Peter Ackroyd, Postmodernist Play and Chatterton," *Twentieth Century Literature* 3. 2 (Summer, 1992): 250.
[28] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 210.

themselves interact bringing past to bear on present and occasionally present to bear on past – or at least the past as it is textually constituted in and by the present.'[29]

The mid-eighteenth century, that is basically the lifetime of Thomas Chatterton, saw a spread of antiquarianism, characterised by 'the perception that [folk] ballads and histories were relics, old and valuable.'[30] Antiquarians were also very enthusiastic about ancient ruins, and aristocrats even built their residences according to the 13th century models. They sometimes even did not hesitate to steal old materials from the buildings that really came from the given period.[31]

Also Thomas Chatterton was from very early age fascinated by the past, which seems natural in a 'choir boy bred in cathedral closes, catching his glimpses of the sky not through green boughs, but through the treetops of Episcopal Gardens discolored by the lancet windows of the clear-stories (...).'[32] Nevertheless, he soon became aware of the antiquarian mood of the age, and, as Henry A. Beers suggests, he might have made use of it: for 'the surest way to win attention to his poems would be to ascribe them to some fictitious bard of the Middle Ages.'[33] Understandable as it is, such common sense and cunning in Chatterton's personality certainly does not harmonise with the Romantic image of an innocent boy-genius.

As it was stated, Ackroyd's fictional portrayal of Chatterton does not contain much idealisation either; his Chatterton is ambitious and full of anxiety to make up for his unsatisfactory family background. As Ackroyd makes him say: 'Being a boy of obscure Birth and imperfect Education, anything that I produc'd myself would have been despised and neglected: (...) I am a poet born which is a greater thing than a gentleman.'[34]

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[29] Finney 258.
[30] Dianne Dugaw, "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads:' The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth-Century," *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 21. 1 (Autumn, 1987): 84.
[31] Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004) 24-5.
[32] Henry A. Beers, *A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* (Toronto: Bastian Books, 2008) 299.
[33] Beers 301.

1. 3 repetition

What remains to be discussed is the second pole of the opposition between the original and the derivative. Presently, it will be distinguished between various terms denoting repetition, which more or less significantly differ in meaning. First of all, the terms denoting an almost reverent attitude of a copy towards its model will be dealt with, than the ones that could be understood as neutral, followed by more subversive and legally problematic terms.

The distinction between the repetition achieved by means of manual and technical reproduction should also be discussed. However, it might be fruitful to consider the problem from a different point of view: to distinguish between reproducing something step by step and taking of its entirety. As Hillel Schwartz states, "s/t/r/o/k/e/ - /b/y/ - /s/t/r/o/k/e re-enactment implied subordination, an unequal collaboration between leader and follower, originator and copyist. The taking of an ENTIRETY implied appropriation."[35] Apart from the fact that Schwartze's distinction involves a specific attitude of the copyist towards the original, it makes one consider the relation of copying something and the necessity to have a certain skill in the activity. We cannot simply say that mechanical reproduction does not require any, because for example stenographs using mechanical means of reproduction needed to know how to use shorthand and even be dextrous enough not to make much mistakes.[36] It is the taking of an entirety which does not require any skill, just pushing a button of a photocopier or camera, which 'freed the hand of the most important artistic functions (...).'[37]

[34] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 87.
[35] Schwartz 224.
[36] Schwartz 224-225.

1. 3. 1 imitation and emulation

Merlin Donald states that the imitation of an action includes also how the action was realised, while emulation 'involves achieving the result or goal of the observed action but not copying the observed means of this result.'[38] This distinction might prove helpful, although not applicable to every case of "imitation" and "emulation." Christian martyrs did not need to sacrifice themselves in the similar act of martyrdom as Jesus Christ did, and still their credo is not a*emulatio Christi.*

The two terms differ in deliberateness and emotional colouring; Skeats paraphrases the verb "emulate" as 'to try to equal,'[39] not as "to equal." On the other hand, "to imitate" comes from Latin *imitāri*, one of whose meanings is simply 'to represent.'[40] There is also explicit adoration of the model inherent in the word "emulation," whereas "imitation" is again quite neutral.

Roman rhetorician Longinus may be considered one of the founders of an approach to literary tradition to a large extent based on emulation, which was later embraced especially by classicist writers. He was convinced that the works of classics like Homer or Demosthenes have the power to 'somehow raise up the soul to the height of its ideal (...);' they were supposed to represent the insurmountable ideal, and at the same time an agent of healthy auto-censorship for aspiring writers who should, according to Longinus, always compare themselves with these great figures of the past. Interestingly, the writers-to-be should also think of themselves from future perspective, consider their potential to become a model for

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[37] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of art in the art of mechanical reproduction," *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Clive Cazeaux (London: Routledge, 2000) 323.
[38] Merlin Donald, "Imitation and Mimesis," *Perspectives on Imitation: Imitation, human development, and culture*, eds. Susan Hurley and Nick Chater (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005) 286.
[39] "Emulate," *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 18th ed., 1958.
[40] "Imitate," *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 1st ed., 1966.

future generations, and ask themselves 'What sort of attention should I win from future ages by such a work?'[41]

Romantic attitude towards the imitation of classics appears to be rather the opposite, manifested for example in the already quoted *Conjectures on the Original Composition*. Young says that those who just imitate and do not create original works 'only give us a sort of Duplicates of what we had, possibly much better, before; increasing the mere Drug of books (...).'[42] It should be noted that even though Young is convinced that true artists create original works solely out of themselves, his reverence of the classics seems to be quite similar to the classicist one.

1. 3. 2 copy

A perfect copy cannot exist, 'no two things can be alike in all respects and still be two, i.e. perfect likeness would amount to identity (...).'[43] "Copy" comes from Latin *copia* meaning, among other things "plenty,"[44] which indeed became inherent in the word denoting in its verb form 'the power of transforming the One into Many.'[45]

Plurality, and especially the one mechanically produced, at least in some respect devaluates the object multiplied. As Walter Benjamin famously states, 'that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art.'[46] Benjamin defines the aura rather vaguely, but it could be roughly described as the essence and unique presence of a particular work of art in time and space; naturally, such presence is violated by the mechanical reproduction of art.

[41] Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. Thomas R. R. Stebbing (London: Whittaker & Co, 1867) 56.
[42] Young 10.
[43] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "Imitation, Expression and Participation," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 3. 11/12 (1945): 64.
[44] "Copy," *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 3rd ed., 1966.
[45] Schwartz 228.
[46] Benjamin 324.

The loss of aura can be connected to overall banalisation within the *society of spectacle* we live in. Guy Debord describes this banalisation using the example of a commodity given certain prestigious lustre by the advertising strategies that surround it; if such a commodity gets to a larger number of customers roughly at the same time, it loses its prestige, and simple becomes banal. Something very similar happens to a work of art when reproduced mechanically (and massively); it becomes to be controlled by the capitalist market in which Guy Debord sees the primary cause of banalisation. It is manifested in the very definition of his key concept of *spectacle* as the moment when the commodity got to occupy the public life fully.[47]

Comparing the copies of one commodity with orthodox Christian icons, Groom states that the 'iconic art object is transparent, at one with the archetype;'[48] all iconic objects thus represent originals. With commodities it is the other way round: there seems to be no material archetype, only some sketch of an object according to which all copies should be produced.

Hence the issue of the vanishing of the original is raised. As Hillel Schwartz puts it, 'Anything unique is at risk of vanishing (...). An object uncopied is under perpetual siege, valued less for itself than for the struggle to prevent its being copied.'[49] It seems as if the elaborate means of protecting an extremely valuable work of art had a similarly disturbing effect on it as contemporary procedures of authentication. Charles Lindholm notices that 'genealogical accreditation by means of technical research on provenance and forensic proof rationalises the value of the work and therefore undermines the charismatic aura that is at the heart of its attraction.'[50] It is also what installing an alarm, putting a camera in the right angle, and employing a man watching through the objective, or, in the case of a painting, covering the canvas with unbreakable glass does – all this may disrupt the aura of a work of art, and

[47] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 1983) 21.
[48] Groom 10.
[49] Schwartz 212.
[50] Lindholm 18.

therefore also its status of the original. Such measures contribute to the rationalisation of the value of a particular work by confirming it from the outside.

The disappearance of the original represents one of Jean Baudrillard's key notions. He begins to build up his famous essay *Simulacra and Simulations* around an image from the story "Del rigor en la ciencia"[51] by J. L. Borges: a map covering the whole of the territory it depicts. Borges's map eventually becomes destroyed, acquiring 'the metaphysical beauty of (...) ruined abstraction.'[52] In order to make the allegory responsive to contemporary reality, Baudrillard proposes to reinvent it. For him it is the territory, that is the original reality, which becomes eroded, or in fact devoured, by its representation – the map. Thus the relation between the map and the territory no longer remains 'a question of imitation (...). It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself.'[53] Based on this assertion Baudrillard suggests a model of imitation where the real or original is lost under the plurality of its images – from advertising, television, other mass media - and eventually substituted by them: the „hyperral." In spite of this, the generation of more and more copies is still possible.

1. 3. 3 quotation and citation

Quotations and citations already belong to the level of repetition to which the appropriating of someone else's work is connected. Both acknowledged and unacknowledged quotations and citations will be discussed, although the latter may near to plagiarism. More time will be devoted to quotations and misquotations in the second chapter; however, they should be briefly introduced also here.

[51] Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science" *Collected Fictions Bk. 3*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Viking, 1998) 325.
[52] Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) 166.
[53] Baudrillard 167.

The origin of the word "citation" can be traced back to *citāre*, meaning 'to summon,'[54] which cannot but evoke the idea of the authorities an author humbly invites to be summoned in his or her footnotes. Dictionaries present "quotation" and "citation" as synonyms, but one comes across a variety of usage. According to Marjorie Garber, the first one can also have the meaning of 'a citation of a citation.'[55] The latter, on the other hand, may be used to refer to the form of giving credit connected with the paraphrase of the passage from someone else's text supporting the author's own arguments.

Primarily, quotations function as 'a kind of cultural ventriloquism, a throwing of the voice that is also an appropriation of authority.'[56] As Hillel Schwartz points out, using just a paraphrase plus citation instead of quoting goes in the appropriation of authority actually further than an exact quotation. It appears that a paraphrase wants to disguise referring to any other's work, which naturally disrupts the status of the authority the given work is seemingly assigned by being cited. A paraphrase tends to be used 'so as not to weaken your resolve "to say anything fresh;"' thus, 'mere citation takes on the authoritativeness full quotation once had.'[57] A good paraphrase may grasp the idea of the original text with precision, but that does not change the fact that the author cited is robbed of his or her original wording.

Speaking of quotation and citation, Guy Debord's idea of *détournement* has to be mentioned. It consists in quoting a passage in such a way that the critical conclusions achieved in the original context are hence subverted or adjusted to another end, and disclosed as 'petrified into respectable truths, namely transformed into lies.'[58] Guy Debord states that the quotation, as opposed to *détournement*, represents a proclamation of authority; however, the authority is always falsified: the passage quoted becomes a mere 'fragment torn from its own context and development, and ultimately from the general framework of its period and

[54] "Cite," *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 18th ed., 1958.
[55] Marjorie Garber, " " (Quotation Marks), *Critical Inquiry* 25. 4 (Summer, 1999): 671
[56] Garber 664.
[57] Schwartz 308.

from the particular option (appropriate or erroneous) that it represented within that framework.'[59] The quoted passage is thus incorporated into a different one, which necessarily modifies what it originally meant; therefore, no particular subversive intentions are needed to undermine its status of an authority – although it appears to be quoted as such.

Hillel Schwartz shares Guy Debord's scepticism as regards protecting the authority of individual texts: 'To quote is by definition to use out of original context, so copyright is a presumptuous assertion of the right to control what is, philosophically, uncontrollable,'[60] meaning that even when the author is given his or her customary credit, their work cannot avoid a change originated by the new context.

Interestingly, the origins of the author as a legal entity seem to be partly accidental. The beginnings of copyright in England date back to an act which passed in 1710. Originally, its aim was to ensure the control of publishers and booksellers over the book production, but, as Mark Rose asserts, what emerged following the change of their powers (as a sort of by-product) was also the author as a legal entity, [61] whose rights had to be taken into account too.

However, even after that many writers, like Lawrence Sterne for instance, did not feel obliged to give credit to all authors whose work they included into their own. In Ackroyd's *Albion*, an inquiry into the origins of English imagination, he speaks about these writers as cultivating a "polyphonic personality,"[62] a certain sense of belonging to and participating in a collective literary tradition, which was, at least in some respect, considered a common property – by borrowing from the other's works writers were also offering their own to be borrowed from.

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[58] Debord 113-114.
[59] Debord 208.
[60] Schwartz 246.
[61] Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: the Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993) 49.
[62] Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* 458.

Nonetheless, when taken out of their original context, famous lines are not just passively affected by the shift; they also bring (depending on the learnedness of the audience) more or less evident traces of the original context into the new one: '(...) the quoted line does work very much like an "unconscious," bringing unwelcome and unvoiced associations to light.'[63] The associations do not have to be always unwelcome, though; especially the works of fiction and poetry make use of quoting for the purposes of bringing particular associations into a text. This type of reference is similar to allusion, a reference which – contrary to quoting – does not involve the repetition of the exact wording; it 'is indirect in the sense that it calls for associations that go beyond mere substitution of a referent. [Allusions] also (...) draw on information not readily available to every member of a cultural and linguistic community (...).'[64]

At one moment Chatterton announces his decision 'to shore up these ancient Fragments with my own genius,'[65] alluding to the final stanza of *The Wasteland*. Ackroyd thus, by means of just a short line, first of all compares Chatterton to his more contemporary successor famous for appropriating a great number of the others' works in his poems. Moreover, the line links Chatterton to Romantics who praised him – and one of whose primary genres was exactly the one of fragment – and even makes him foretell his own future: 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins,'[66] goes the exact wording of the quoted passage in *The Wasteland*.

1. 3. 4 forgery, counterfeit and plagiarism

In *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* Ackroyd emphasises that still at the beginning of the eighteenth century forgeries were welcomed as a species of masquerade, as a

[63] Garber 671.
[64] William Irwin, "What Is an Allusion?", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59. 3 (Summer, 2001): 289.
[65] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 85.

continuous play of changing identities.[67] At the end of the century such camouflage was already resented.

Nick Groom sums up the difference between the meaning of counterfeit and forgery in the following way: 'A counterfeit is a facsimile copy. (...) Forgery, however, has no actual original source; it conjures the illusion of a source,'[68] which is also the case of the "Rowley poems" by Thomas Chatterton. As to what the terms have in common, both counterfeit and forgery are produced by the craft of a skilful person; not by the mere taking of the entirety of an original.

Forgers and counterfeiters received an extraordinary appreciation of their skills by the Australian government: 'In early New South Wales,' which was a penal colony from 1788 to 1823, 'convicts who had served their time for forgery were given jobs in the colony's newly established banks.'[69] There was a great shortage of skilled workers, so the government allowed itself some benevolence.

Within the sphere of art and literature both counterfeit and forgery are naturally very subversive; they 'misrepresent the nature of the performance and so misrepresent the achievement'[70] – and not only in the sense of attributing it to another person. In their respective ways they blur the difference between the original and imitation. A counterfeiter may master the style of an artist he aims to imitate to the degree that his own work will be unrecognisable from the original; he or she may manage to obtain antique colours or parchment, possibly refinable by some distressing, an 'art of worrying surfaces to make them appear older,'[71] and thereby delude those who might attempt to authenticate his or her work.

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[66] T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999) 39.
[67] Ackroyd, *The Origins of the English Imagination* 458.
[68] Groom 6.
[69] Judith Ryan and Alfred Thomas, eds. *Cultures of Forgery: Making Nations, Making Selves* (New York: Routledge, 2003) ix.
[70] Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure & Human Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 187.
[71] Schwartz 279.

Somewhere between the counterfeiter and the forger is a man who creates new works, but still under the name of a particular artist and in the style of its true possessor. He or she might thus seriously interfere with the established perception of the particular artist. For example, Denis Dutton mentions a forger of Vermeer's paintings, van Meegeren, and points out that as he 'continued to forge, the "Vermeer style" became more and more disfigured (...).'[72]

Because of the necessity to invent a source, the delusion produced by a forger reaches much further than the one of the counterfeiter. The forger may be successful if he or she tries to exploit the institution of literature or art, and use its established methods of authentication for their purposes – he or she may "find" a marginal work by the supposed author of the work they need to authenticate, "discover" a letter contextualising the artist within a group of his contemporaries, or a document, which would confirm the veracity of a particular work.

In short, to mask a forgery, one has to multiply it, which is also what Chatterton himself did. When he presented his forgeries to Sir William Barett, a surgeon from Bristol, and a devoted antiquarian, he gave him 'copies of supposed documents in the muniment room of Redcliffe Church (...) deeds, bills, letters, inscriptions, proclamations, accounts of churches and other buildings, collected by Rowley for his patron, Canynge (...).'[73] Sir William was soon convinced.

In plagiarism the extreme of appropriation of someone else's work is reached. Even the original meaning of the word denoted a criminal activity: Latin *plagiārus* meant "kidnapper, seducer" or "plunderer."[74] Hillel Schwartz laconically sums up the difference between forgery and plagiarism as follows: 'Plagiarists hope that their thefts will be taken for inventions (...). Forgers hope that their originals will be taken for classics; (...).'[75]

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[72] Dutton 179.
[73] Beers 303.
[74] "Plagiarism," *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 3rd ed., 1966.
[75] Schwartz 315.

Naturally, an unacknowledged quotation seems to be an example of plagiarism. However, to determine if it is or is not depends on a shared perception of literary tradition and the role of the reader in literary production. As described above, literature may be seen as a space where the "polyphonic personality" is cultivated, and if the reader is not underestimated, he or she may be trusted to detect an unacknowledged quotation, or the metafictional nature of a particular novel, and accept it. The importance ascribed to the role of the reader reaches its peak in postmodern literature and the thinking about it; for instance, Roland Barthes in his *The Death of the Author* states that the unity of a text lies 'not in its origin, but in its destination.'[76]

1. 4 Chatteron's forgery

Now the time comes to supply a few pieces of information concerning the central figure of Ackroyd's *Chatterton* that have been missing and may be relevant for later discussion. Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) was born in Bristol, three months after his father died. His literary activity was not limited only to the forgeries he ascribed to the fifteenth century monk named Rowley. For instance, it is interesting to note that in the times of Chatterton Bristol was a slave-trading port, and Marylin Butler suggests that the contact with slave trade contributed to Chatterton's 'respect for the otherness of east and south'[77] manifested for example in his *African Eclogues*, portraying African characters almost in the fashion of Greek pastorals: 'Thro' scented Calamus and fragrant reeds;/Where the sweet Zinsa spreads its matted bed;/Liv'd the still sweeter flow'r, the young Mored; (...).'[78] In any case, Chatterton wanted to leave Bristol for London, which he did, and began to write articles, essays, satires

[76] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York.: Hill and Wang, 1977) 148.
[77] Marylin Butler, "Romanticism in England," *Romanticism in a National Context*, eds. Roy Porter and Miklas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 46.
[78] Thomas Chatterton, "Narva and Mored," *The Works of Thomas Chatterton*, vol. I (London: T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1803) 15.

(with that he began already in Bristol), or songs for several newspapers, and even a comic opera.

As it was already stated, as a source of his medieval forgeries Chatterton invented Thomas Rowley, a priest employed by an illustrious Bristol citizen, William Canynge, who actually existed, to collect manuscripts and antiquities. While creating Rowley Chatterton could rely on being an avid reader acquainted, among other things, with James Mcpherson's *The Works of Ossian* (1765), and probably also *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) by Thomas Percy. Chatterton even included a few parodies of Ossianic poems in his "Memoirs of a Sad Dog."

As regards the language of Rowley poems 'Old English, Middle English, and Elizabethan English, South of England folk-words or Scots phrases taken from the border ballads—all were grist for Rowley's mill.'[79] After its first encounter with an academic authority such a mixture was naturally revealed as a forgery. Thomas Warton, a professor of poetry from Oxford, also called attention to its 'unnatural affectation of ancient spelling' or 'artificial misapplication of antiquated diction.'[80] In spite of that, according to M. E. Hare, the question of Rowley's authenticity was not 'conclusively and finally solved till Professor Skeat brought out his edition of Chatterton in 1871.'[81]

It should be noted that those who were convinced of Rowley's authenticity desperately *wanted* him to be an actual historical figure. George Catcott, Chatterton's patron and an

[79] Maurice Evan Hare, "The Value of Rowley´s Poems – Philological and Literary," *The Rowley Poems by Thomas Chatterton Reprinted from Tyrwhitt´s Third Edition*, ed. Maurice Evan Hare, *Project Gutenberg*, 28 Jul. 2004, 21 Apr. 2010 < http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/13037/pg13037.html>.
[80] Thomas Chatterton, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Chatterton With Notices of His Life, A History of the Rowley Controversy, A Selection of His Letters, Notes Critical and Explanatory, And a Glossary* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1864) xix-xx.
[81] Maurice Evan Hare, "The Value of Rowley's Poems – Philological and Literary," *The Rowley Poems by Thomas Chatterton Reprinted from Tyrwhitt's Third Edition*, ed. Maurice Evan Hare, *Project Gutenberg*, 28 Jul. 2004, 21 Apr. 2010 < http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/13037/pg13037.html>.

ardent believer in Rowley, made 'transcripts [of the Rowley poems] for eighteenth century noblemen, where the poems were made more antiquated to satisfy the taste of the day.'[82]

Another prominent advocate of the fictitious monk was also Jacob Bryant who based his evaluation of the Rowley poems on calling attention to the errors he found in the notes Chatterton accompanied the manuscripts with, because 'chance could never have so contrived that the poetry should be better than the purpose.'[83] Since Chatterton made mistakes in his notes to the texts, which Bryant enthusiastically praised, he simply could not be the author of the Rowley poems. Bryant produced six hundred pages of text in order to display all the errors Chatterton committed, but omitted to add to his 'vast amount of antiquarian lore'[84] a decent study of the actual Rowley poems.

Professor Warton noticed also a few anachronisms in "Rowley's" text, namely the eighteenth century opinions about Stonehenge in the poems allegedly about three centuries older. This fact may prove fruitful for determining the degree of inspiration Ackroyd drew from Chatterton's work in his novel. For example, in *Chatterton* he makes George Meredith[85] state, 'There is nothing more real than words. They are reality.'[86] In such words one might perceive the echoes of quite a recent view that everything, even time (which will be elaborated in the next chapters), as George Steiner puts it, 'can be seen as a function of language, as a system of location and referral, whose main coordinates are linguistics.'[87] Similar anachronisms will be further discussed in the fourth chapter.

[82] E. H. W. Meyerstein, *Life of Chatterton*, (London: Ingpen & Grant, 1930)173.
[83] Chatterton, *The Poetical Works* xii.
[84] Chatterton, *The Poetical Works* xiii.
[85] George Meredith (1828-1909) – a central character of the 19th century level of *Chatterton*; English poet and novelist paying particular attention to the psyche of characters; his wife abandoned him for Henry Wallis, a painter who made a portrait of Meredith as young Thomas Chatterton. See the Picture 1.
[86] Peter Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 157.
[87] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 136.

2. Repetition and Intertextuality

2. 1 basic terms

According to H. F. Plett, 'every text is always subjected to a process of repetition,'[1] among other things because of the very fact that it draws on other texts and it itself is drawn upon. Correspondingly, to insist on 'the inalienable originality of texts,'[2] as so called "negative intertextuality" does, would mean they are completely separated from other texts, which is hardly conceivable.

J. T. Jones states that: 'All types of intertextuality rely on the recognition of the relationship between what David Cowart calls the "host" and the "guest" texts.'[3] Nevertheless, one often cannot determine with certainty which is which. As J. Hillis Miller asks, substituting the term "guest" for a more expressive one: 'Is a citation an alien parasite within the body of the main text; or is the interpretive text the parasite which surrounds and strangles the citation which is its host?'[4] Hillis's conclusion is that the relation is mutual, which will be presently demonstrated by the discussion of the character of Andrew Flint.

A key term for thinking about intertextuality represents the notion of "intertext," which Michael Riffaterre describes as 'one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance.'[5] For example, when Charles visits Harriet (characters from *Chatterton* to be discussed in this chapter), he greets

[1] Howard F. Plett, "Intertextualities," *Intertextuality*, ed. Howard F. Plett (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991)17.
[2] Plett 19.
[3] J. T. Jones, "Depending on Memory: Intertextuality in Popular Fiction," *Journal of American Culture* 25. 1-2 (Spring 2002): 81.
[4] J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as a Host," *Deconstruction and Criticism*, Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman, J. Hillis Miller (London and New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 2004) 177.
[5] Michael Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response: the Intertextual Drive," *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, eds. Michael Worton, Judith Still (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1991) 56.

her with 'The Lady of Shalott,' to which she reacts 'More like Lady Chatterley.'[6] In order to understand the meaning of the correction one has to be familiar with both Tennyson's and Lawrence's intertext.

H. F. Plett specifies the notion of intertext as regards its 'twofold coherence: an intratextual one which guarantees the immanent integrity of the text, and an intertextual one which creates structural relations between itself and other texts.'[7] A text is confronted with and tied to an intertext through allusions and quotations; a few aspects of how it is done in Ackroyd's novel will be analysed in the next sections.

2. 2 writerly characters

Repetition and intertextuality will be discussed chiefly in the connection with the writerly characters in Ackroyd's novel. Other recurrent motifs of *Chatterton* could be subjected to a similar analysis: the child, picture, or death. All of them participate in striking intertextual and intratextual connections in the novel. Nevertheless, it is the writerly figure that should be first and foremost looked at in detail in relation to the topic of intertextuality; one of the main themes of *Chatterton* is 'the troubled relationship of the individual writer with the literary tradition in which he or she is inscribed.'[8] Writers necessarily relate to their predecessors and counterparts, they let themselves be inspired by them, and suffer the "anxieties of [their] influence."[9]

First of all, the characters of writers belonging to the 1980's level of the novel will be dealt with, and then the central writerly figures of the three time levels *Chatterton* consists of. Apart from its significance as an element bringing intertexts to the text of *Chatterton*, the writerly figure as such raises a number of specific questions which all relate to the topic of

[6] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 38
[7] Plett 5.
[8] Susana Onega Jaén, *Metafiction and Myth in the Novels of Peter Ackroyd* (Columbia: Camden House, 1999) 58.

repetition: for example the degree of a writer's willingness to compromise with the literary market, and especially the issues of influence and inspiration.

2. 2. 1 quotation and intertextuality

Charles Wychwood is an idealist poet who firmly believes that his genius is sure to be recognised. However, he composes poems very slowly, and in spite of his strangely persistent headaches connected with eyesight problems he believes to have 'all the time in the world.'[10] Eventually, he dies of a brain tumor. Although Charles has never published anything, he keeps on referring to his "book" – a few pages he and his wife Xeroxed and distributed along several bookshops. Charles's wife Vivien shares her husband's belief in his poetic genius and without protest makes the money her family needs. One day Charles discovers two volumes of *The Lost Art of Eighteenth Century Flute-Playing* by James Macpherson he purchased long ago in a second-hand bookshop, and perceives in it a means how to put an end to his miserable material situation. Nevertheless, after he is told that he would not be given much for this antique book, he decides to exchange it for the portrait later on "disclosed" as depicting old Thomas Chatterton, which in the course of the novel becomes the centre of a theory that Thomas Chatterton faked his suicide and lived as well as wrote on. Ironically, the volume Charles exchanged for the portrait has much in common with it: most probably, they are both fakes connected to a famous forger.

It seems that in Andrew Flint Ackroyd created Charles's very contrast. Flint and Charles were friends at university; the former also used to write poetry, but eventually built his career upon the genres of fiction and autobiography, which can be read as an example of Ackroyd's self-irony.[11] Flint became hugely commercially successful, but he never married,

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[9] Harold Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
[10] Peter Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 75.
[11] Ackroyd began his career as a poet; moreover, when interviewed, he described his present working schedule in the following way: 'Normally the idea is that I alternate prose fiction with ordinary prose narratives. So that has

and does not see much sense in his work, which seems to him 'no more than the hole through which he was falling.'[12] He is aware of the spectacularisation of reality, as well as the commodification of books by the literary market in which he, nevertheless, cannot resist participating. 'There are no standards to encourage permanence – only novelty, and the whole endless cycle of new objects. And books are simply objects – consumer items picked up and lay aside,'[13] he says.

Almost all the writerly figures that will be dealt with delight in quoting literary works, but Andrew Flint alone has a habit of quoting Latin phrases excessively. It was already stated that 'the quoted line does work very much like an "unconscious."[14] It brings into the new context of one's text traces of the original one, thereby creating a wealth of associations, and supplying an intertext through which what one writes is supposed to be read. However, this is not exactly the case of the phrases Flint quotes.

The continuous referring to Latin authors serves Flint as a protective shield of alleged learning readily displayed to any communication partner. His way of using the quotes reminds one of Hillis's metaphor of the parasite: 'The host feeds the parasite and makes its life possible, but at the same time is killed by it (...).'[15] The ambiguity about a clear distinction between the "host" text and the "guest" or "parasite" one can be perceived also in Flint's case. As a host he makes the "life" of the words of long dead authors possible by uttering them. As a parasite he clings to them in order to gain self-confidence, but simultaneously threatens their existence by repeating them ad nauseam. As it was asserted in the previous chapter, repetition without variation tends to reduce the significance of the thing repeated and makes it banal. At literary presence of the novel's 1980's level, Flint's quoting habit appears to have developed

technical reasons because I do the novels in the morning and in the afternoons I research for the next book or biography.' (Anke Schűtze,"I think after More I will probably do Turner and then I will do Shakespeare." An Interview with Peter Ackroyd, *EESE* 8/1995: 166.)

[12] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 235.

[13] Peter Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 150.

[14] Garber 671.

[15] Miller, *Deconstruction and Criticism* 177.

into a pure neurosis of which Harriet Scrope - another writer who is to be discussed – tries to cure him in the end:[16]

> 'Sunt lacrimae rerum, don't you think? Mentem mortalia tangunt?'
>
> 'Does that mean, *they're dropping like flies?*' She adopted a solemn voice for this phrase. 'Well, they are.'
>
> 'Exeunt omnes -' he began to say.
>
> 'In vino veritas.'[17]

Apart from parodying Flint good-naturedly Harriet seems to near Guy Debord's technique of *détournement*. The lines Flint quotes have no original context of which Harriet or the general readership would be aware; quite in the sense of Barthes's mythical sign,[18] they are mere tokens of (over)learnedness and pretentiousness for them. Thus the false nature of the authoritative function[19] assigned to them by Flint is easier to detect than as regards other kinds of quotations. The weak semblance of authority they create readily falls apart when Harriet deconstructs their signification of pretentious learning and uneasiness with social situations.

How exactly does she do that? Even for Harriet and the readership unacquainted with literature in Latin the Latin lines Flint quotes retain vague traces of contexts in which they *tend to* be used (very solemn occasions, for instance). Thus not only Flint, but even such practice of quoting itself can be easily subverted by means of using a quotation in a context which markedly differs from the habitual one – as Harriet does with *In vino veritas*. H. F. Plett calls the discrepancy between two or more contexts a particular quotation belongs to

[16] The scene takes place at Charles's funeral.
[17] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 177.
[18] Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," *Mythologies*, trans. Anette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1973) 109-110.

"interference,"[20] which Harriet – contrary to the instances Plett deals with – makes use of without changing the habitual form of the lines she quotes.

Harriet Scrope is an idiosyncratic elderly author of a few novels suffering from creative block, which she endeavours to overcome by piecing her memoirs together. In order to do so she engages Charles Wychwood as her assistant. Concerning Harriet's own way of quoting, it should be stated that she almost always misquotes. When her friend Sarah casually mentions Thomas Chatterton in conversation, Harriet is prompted to quote – and bring it as an intertext into *Chatterton* - a line from Marlow's *Doctor Faustus*:

> 'Cut is the bough,' she said 'that might have grown full straight.' And she doubled up, as if she were about to be sawn in half.
>
> 'Branch.' Sarah was very deliberate.
>
> 'I'm sorry?'
>
> 'It was a branch, dear, not a bough. If you were quoting.'[21]

What is the significance of such a minute and apparently unintentional slip? For instance, it proves that Harriet does not pay much attention to details and focuses instead on the core, which her own creative practise tinged with plagiarism confirms. At the same time, the very act of quoting a time-honoured piece of literature is undermined by Sarah's insistence on the exact wording. The meaning does not change in Harriet's misquotation; a "bough" is also a more literary word than "branch," and thus seemingly more "appropriate" for *Doctor Faustus*. What also subverts the practise of quoting a literary work is the fact that

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[19] Stefan Morawski, "The Basic Functions of Quotation," *Sign, Language, Culture: Signe, Langage, Culture*, ed. A. J. Greimais (The Hague: Mouton, 1970) 693.
[20] Plett 11.
[21] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 34-35.

Harriet began to quote the lines immediately after Sarah mentioned the name of Chatterton, because she was bored by their conversation.

A small digression seems to be required to consider Sarah's meticulousness about the flawless form of the quote. It stems in the 'transcendent value,' the play has, 'as the personal creation of a particular artist/genius'[22] Charles Lindholm considers this transcendent value a reason for a forged art object to be removed from the museum wall, but it applies also to maintaining the exact wording of a quotation.

Not only literary works can be misquoted; one can do so with idioms, for instance. Instead of "Let them eat humble pie," meaning "let them learn to be humble," Harriet expresses her opinion of academic critics by 'Let them eat cake,'[23] representing both a childlike simplification of the original idiom, but also its stronger version with possibly vulgar overtones (given the slang meanings of "cake"[24]). Harriet's version, similarly to her use of Latin quotations, ridicules both academic critics, and the very practice of using idioms. Only in this case Harriet does not play with interference; instead, she only adjusts the idiom so that it regained more expressivity.

Charles's friend Philip Slack who works as a librarian experiences a kind of initiation throughout the novel, which is marked by Harriet's calling Philip "Pip," the name of a character from Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*, being a classic example of the Bindungsroman genre. Moreover, exactly this book Charles eats (literally) at the beginning of the novel. By doing so he seems to foreshadow Philip's later development.

Philip once tried to write a novel, but when he managed to complete a page it 'seemed to him to be filled with images and phrases from the work of other writers whom he

[22] Lindholm 17.
[23] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 98.
[24] Especially that of "vagina." ("Cake," *The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English*, 1st ed. (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

admired.'[25] Philip himself expresses the problem by Harold Bloom's phrase "anxiety of influence." In his theory of poetry Bloom distinguishes between the *strong* and *weak* poets (but it may involve writers in general) for whom the criteria of greatness or innovativeness do not apply: 'Poetic strength comes only from a triumphant wrestling with the greatest of the dead (...).'[26] This is exactly what Philip is not capable of at the beginning of his initiation journey, but in the end he realises that he does not need to do that.

In the beginning he is quite reticent and speaks mostly in one-word utterances, and therefore, contrary to all the characters discussed above, does not participate in the ongoing quoting play. However, after the death of his friend Philip begins to take care of Vivien and her son, does all what is needed as regards the mystery of Chatterton, and begins 'to realise he could talk: now that there were two people who had come to rely upon him, he was not deflected by nervousness and embarrassment.'[27] The rediscovered power of unrestrained speech obviously represents a basis for Philip's renewed confidence in himself as a writer: in the end, he decides to write a book inspired by what the characters of *Chatterton* experienced.

Thus Charles appears to be reborn in Philip: with more creative powers, health and common sense. Philip might be understood as representing almost Charles's *tessera*,[28] as Bloom puts it, a partial antitethis and eventually the completion of his friend. The remarkably strong connection between Philip and Charles, even to the extent of their merging, supports also the fact that it was Philip who actually started the quest for the meaning of the portrait depicting "old Chatterton." It was he who "identified" Chatterton in the portrait.

[25] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 70.
[26] Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) 9.
[27] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 214.
[28] Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* 14.

2. 2. 2 strong poet according to Bloom and Ackroyd

Going back to the *Anxiety of Influence*, it must be stated that Ackroyd's idea of a "serious writer" does not exactly harmonise with Bloom's notion of a strong poet, wrestling not only with his or her precursors, but with the void. According to Bloom, the strong poet much less willingly accepts "the consciousness of death's necessity than all other men and women do."[29] Ackroyd, on the other hand, describes the "strongest" period of Harriet's literary career as the one when she was able to face the void – though in a more abstract sense - all the time: 'She had allowed the language to carry her forward; she had not tried to direct it. She had been a serious writer then, a proper writer: she had not known what she was trying to say.'[30] It took her eight years to finish her first novel in this way.

What she thus also managed to do was – as far as she was aware – to cut herself from her contemporaries and precursors. However, such a way of writing appears to be extremely problematic, and not only because of the persistence of writerly anxieties. Is it the most suitable way of representing reality – to ignore the proliferation of texts that surround one? Ackroyd's answer to the question lies in the genre of metafiction to which *Chatterton* belongs. Metafiction draws on existing works of literature to show 'how literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds,' and thus 'helps us to understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly "written."'[31] The relation between repetition and metafiction will be elaborated on in the fourth chapter.

After her successful attempt at being a "proper writer" Harriet comes across the work of Harrison Bentley, a forgotten Victorian author, and begins to draw on the plots of his novels, which the reader learns via Philip's accidental discovery of certain parallels between the two writers' works. Philip himself does not consider Harriet a plagiarist for she always reworks and adjusts the plots of Bentley's novels and her style has a characteristic

[29] Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* 10.

'combination of violence and comedy (...).'[32] Harriet thus appears to be a plagiarist, borrowing from the plots of someone else's work without acknowledging it, combined with a skilful forger recreating the matter at hand by the 'sense of creative vivacious trickery,'[33] Groom ascribes to forgers. She is not a metafictional writer, though. She does not freely expose her borrowing from Bentley's works; quite the contrary, she is afraid that someone will discover what she does.

2. 2. 3. triple Chatterton

Ackroyd's novel has three time levels and to each of them a character of one young poet corresponds. There is the 18th level with Thomas Chatterton, the 19th century one inhabited by George Meredith and the 20th century one with Charles Wychwood. In the next section the mutual relation of the three writerly characters and the corresponding levels of the book will be examined.

Onega Jaén observed that the time structure of *Chatterton* resembles W. B. Yeats's view of historical time. As she puts it, the three levels of the novel are presented as forming

> part of a cyclical space – time continuum that constantly feeds on itself and simultaneously moves forward and backward, so that the protagonists of each story (...), can easily cross their respective historical boundaries and interact with each other.[34]

Nevertheless, it will be suggested that the time structure of *Chatterton* is possible to explain without recourse to such grandiose and fantastic images. What should be considered

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[30] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 103.
[31] Waugh 18-19.
[32] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 70.
[33] Groom 15.
[34] Onega Jaén 60.

is Ackroyd's 'refusal to distinguish between the genres of biography and fiction,'[35] based on the assumption that what a biography presents is always just its author's interpretation, and that 'to ask for the significance of an event in the *historical* sense of the term, is to ask a question which can be answered only in the context of a *story*,'[36] as Arthur Coleman Danto states.

Danto's statement is less controversial when applied to the genre of historical fiction than autobiography. As a whole, *Chatterton* could be considered a work of historical fiction. Lubomír Doležel asserts that in this genre both historical and fictional facts represent authentified textual constructs.[37] Such a levelling of the distinction between the two kinds of facts in *Chatterton* is also triggered by the fact that, being a metafictional novel, it exposes 'its condition of artifice.'[38] All in all, it is the same status of fictional and historical facts in his novel what enables Ackroyd to make the elements pertaining to the different time levels of the novel transgress their boundaries.

As Danto asserted, the most convenient way how to discover the significance of a particular historical fact is to place it within the context of what happened. One does so in the form of a narrative or, to put it generally, a text. As such, it is naturally located within 'the web of functions that constitutes and regulates the relationships between text and intertext.'[39] All three time levels of *Chatterton* – two of them set in a particular historical period and one in the presence – can thus be understood as each other's intertexts and an example of 'self-intertextualisation'[40] in the novel.

As for the self-intertextualisation in *Chatterton*, it is for example interesting to consider the surname of Charles Wychwood, the main character of the 20th century level. In

[35] Finney 250.
[36] Arthur Coleman Danto, *Narration and Knowledge: Including the Integral Text of Analytical Philosophy of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 11.
[37] Lubomír Doležel, *Fikce a historie v období postmoderny* (Praha: Academia, 2008) 97.
[38] Waugh 4.
[39] Riffaterre 57.
[40] Plett 19.

short, it is a surname which would be perfectly appropriate for a character created by Thomas Chatterton. Chatterton endeavoured to make his Rowley write in as genuine late Middle English as possible. As regards the rather unusual *y* after the initial *w* in Charles's surname, in late Middle English orthography it 'was written in many cases instead of *i*; because *i* was written without a dot, and so was liable to be mistaken for a part of another letter (...).'[41] To sum up, the 18th century level of the novel functions as an intertext of the 20th century one for example because of shedding some light on Charles's peculiar surname that most of the other characters of his level are confused with and repeat it in a wrong way.

Chatterton is Charles's precursor, but not in Harold Bloom's sense; his influence on Charles does not consist in the latter's "wrestling"[42] with and the subsequent misreading of the former. In the course of his education as a poet Charles must have absorbed Chatterton as a part of the English literary tradition. Ackroyd makes this fact explicit by juxtaposing the textual level of Charles and the textual level of Chatterton, and thereby connecting the two figures intertextually.

Most significantly, reading the 20th level through the 18th century one illuminates Charles's imitation of the posture in which Thomas Chatterton died: lying on his back, one hand trailing on the floor, the other one clutched on his chest. Charles imitates it not only when he actually dies, but also mockingly in the first chapter when playing with his son. It is the logic of intertextuality, which makes this foreshadowing possible – before Charles "discovers" what the portrait reminds him of, he may imitate the person in the portrait only because he finds himself within the text where Chatterton's death posture occurs in multiple versions: in the 18th century level recreation of the scene by Ackroyd, the 19th century level recreation of it by Meredith, or a reproduction of Wallis's painting at the cover of the 1987 edition of *Chatterton*. All of these can be considered as belonging to the different intertexts

[41] Henry Sweet, *A Short Historical English Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892) 38.
[42] Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* 5.

interconnected with Charles's level of the book, and thereby influencing it - if we understand as the basic property of a text that it means something,[43] in which case it is possible to include also the cover.

From the characters being discussed in this section Chatterton comes the first by way of chronology, and hence one's urge to consider him the "original" and George Meredith as well as Charles Wychwood – given their resemblance to him – his reflections. However, the very posture of Chatterton's death raises the issue of "vanishing original" that has been dealt with in the previous chapter. As the posture in which Chatterton died is concerned, the sign of the real was indeed substituted for the real itself.[44] Subsequent ages "know" the circumstances of Chatterton's death mainly from the picture of him painted by Henry Wallis, which is in turn based on an account of the poet's death. Therefore, only the representations of Chatterton's death may be imitated by Charles and Meredith, not the event itself, which is irretrievable. By emphasising that what we know of Chatterton's death – the most inevitable, real and finite thing of life – wholly depends on its representations that are 'exempt from truth-valuation' and 'performative speech acts,'[45] Ackroyd could not have made a clearer statement on the possibility of reaching the exact nature of the past. Wallis's careful preparations of the setting for the portrait (for example), so that it resembled the scene of the poet's death as much as possible, are thus revealed as quite futile.

George Meredith imitates the posture of Chatterton's death in the plain sense of posing as a model for the above-mentioned painting, but his engagement has a striking coda in *Chatterton*. When the painting is finished, Wallis wants to show it to Meredith's wife and she sees 'a small nervous movement in his left eye-lid. She wanted to put out her hand to soothe

[43] Barthes, *Mythologies* 109.
[44] Baudrillard 167.
[45] Lubomír Doležel, *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press) 146.

it, to touch his face. And now, across 'Chatterton' [her husband, actually] this is what she did'[46] and confirmed that her husband was "dead," as she was concerned.

Going back to the elaboration of "host" and "parasite," another concept Miller uses, which is worth mentioning in relation to the character of Chatterton is the notion of "virus," a special kind of parasite with a 'strange capacity (...) to turn the host into multitudinous proliferating replications of itself.'[47] As it was already touched upon, beacuse of their resemblance to and connections with Chatterton, both Meredith and Charles could be seen as his replications, in a sense – especially as regards their death and "death."

The power of Chatterton's imitations to proliferate on their own is questionable; however, as it was suggested, there is Philip Slack who might be seen as Charles's eventual completion and a successor. Concerning Meredith, it should not be forgotten that he helped to multiply Chatterton by posing as a model for Wallis's portrait. Thus he firstly became Chatterton when reenacting him; secondly, because of his contribution a representation of Chatterton came into being. The 1987 edition of *Chatterton* is a material proof that this representation was taken by the 'capitalist art market which turns cultic objects into commodities, and (...) mechanical reproduction (...),'[48] making its proliferation infinite.

To consider Chatterton not a virus but a host figure, it is necessary to see him as a source of inspiration, which is particularly emphasised by the idea that Chatterton did not die, continued writing, and wrote about a half of the 18th century poetry, works we nowadays ascribe to William Blake or Thomas Gray. For example, at the very end when Meredith, Charles and Chatterton meet, Chatterton speaks to the other two in the words of Wordsworth: 'We poets in our youth (...) begin in gladness, but thereof come in the end despondency and madness.'[49]

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[46] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 175.
[47] Miller, *Deconstruction and Criticism* 181.
[48] Lindholm 23-4.
[49] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 233. The poem "Resolution and Independence" is quoted.

As it was stated, the meeting and the fact that Chatterton quotes the poem that was written thirty seven years after his death, need to be considered in the above-sketched context of the identical status of fictional and historical facts in a work of fiction. Chatterton is able to speak to and "meet" Meredith and Charles, because they are all parts of the same interconnectedness of texts.

However, Chatterton's speaking the words of Wordworth could be perceived also metaphorically, and the poet as a source that actually contains what comes after him, waiting to bestow it upon others in the process of being misread by them.[50] Last but not least, making Chatterton utter the words of Wordsworth calls attention to his being an inspiration for the poet when he was writing his "Resolution and Independence" to which the quoted passage belongs, and whose seventh stanza begins with 'I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy (...).'[51]

2. 3 secondary and primary imagination in *Chatterton*

The question whether to accept intertextuality and make conscious use of it in the process of literary creation or not makes one recall Coleridge's distinction between the primary and secondary imagination. As it was stated, the first one represents a godlike ability to create out of nothing, whereas the second 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates' literary texts 'in order to recreate,'[52] them in a new one.

In the beginning of her career Harriet Scrope imagines herself to be governed by the first type of imagination, and so does Charles Wychwood, being the novel's only character who does not suffer from the anxiety of influence at all. The second type is connected with Harriet's later writing inspired by Harrison Bentley, and possibly that of Philip Slack. Philip

[50] Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* 5.
[51] William Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence," *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Henry Reed (Philadelphia: Troutman & Hayes, 1854) 181.

is still a budding artist, but the experience with his earlier attempts to become a writer made him realise that 'if you trace anything backwards, trying to figure out cause and effect, or motive, or meaning, there is no real *origin* for anything.'[53] Having realised this, Philip ceases to worry about the impossibility to find an *absolutely* original style, and presumably thus embraces the sphere of secondary imagination.

In the course of discussing the multiplied writerly figure it was demonstrated that the intertextuality of *Chatterton* considerably subverts the notion of originality based on what Lindholm calls a transcendent value of personal creation. Not only that the primary imagination as an attribute of human capacities could be questioned, but it is also necessary to realise that even if a human being managed to create a purely original work of literature, there would still remain numerous factors contributing to a particular text's meaning its author has no power to influence. First and foremost, the perception of literary works changes over time, one dominant reading succeeds another. As John Frow states, 'Texts are shaped not [just] by immanent time but by the play of divergent temporalities;'[54] Ackroyd's awareness of that as well as the concept of secondary imagination will be further discussed in the fourth chapter.

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[52] Coleridge 378.
[53] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 232.
[54] John Frow, "Intertextuality and Ontology" *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, eds. Michael Worton, Judith Still (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1991) 45.

3. Repetition and the Structure of *Chatterton*

3. 1 repetition and non-literary means of representation

Two major examples of how repetition contributes to forming the structure of *Chatterton* will be discussed; both of them are no mere devices for dividing the text into parts – they simultaneously enrich the meaning as well as the aesthetic value of the text. The first example represents the most evident instance of self-intertextualisation as well as the application of a musical principal in the novel; as regards the second one, the words involved in the process of repetition near the status of a means of visual representation.

3. 2 the "ouverture"

By way of preface, Ackroyd introduces his novel with four short passages from different places in the text that present the reader the most important characters of the book: Thomas Chatterton, George Meredith and Henry Wallis, Harriet Scrope and Charles Wychwood. They also introduce the basic themes to be encountered further in the book, such as Chatterton's ambition, the theme of death, the question of what it means to be an artist, and even the use of quotations; in this respect, the introduction resembles an operatic overture. Since the times of Ludwig van Beethoven who 'finally developed an independent style in which the overture foreshadowed the entire theme of the opera (...) overtures regularly contained movements and melodies from the main theme.'[1]

Each of the passages comes from a particular place in the novel except for the first one: a glimpse into Chatterton's childhood. In this passage the reader practically walks into the conversation: '"Come," he said. "Let us take a walk into the meadow,"'[2] says young

[1] "Overture," *Musical Dictionary. The American History and Encyclopedia of Music*, 1st ed., 1908.
[2] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 2.

Chatterton to an anonymous girl who mocks him for being poor. The fact that this is the only passage from the overture-like introduction whose mirror image cannot be found in the actual text of the novel paradoxically contradicts the elusiveness of Chatterton's figure, which – as it was stated in the second chapter – is known to the reader firstly from his representation in the form of the painting by Henry Wallis, and secondly from various texts dealing with Chatterton: the poems inspired by him, his biography, or a leaflet from the church Chatterton used to go to. Nevertheless, from the characters in the introduction Chatterton is the only one that "reaches behind" the text of the novel in this respect. Therefore, going back to Doležel's discussion of historical fiction, it is not accurate to say Ackroyd puts *all* the historical facts in *Chatterton* on the same level with the fictional ones.

When the passages from the introduction occur further in the text they have more or less different wording. In this respect the parts of the introduction indeed resemble various themes presented in an operatic overture that tend to vary when they appear in an opera after their first occurrence. Nevertheless, to be precise, in comparison to an overture the initial versions of the particular passages seem to be more refined, completed and meaningful than the ones to be encountered further in the text, whereas overtures simply contain 'movements and melodies from the main theme.'[3]

Concerning the passage featuring George Meredith and Henry Wallis, the two occurrences in reality share merely one sentence, having only a slightly different form in each case. Its version from the text of the novel has a slightly frivolous and ironic overtone. George Meredith comments on his task to impersonate the dead Chatterton in the following way: 'I am a model poet at least. I'm pretending to be someone else.'[4] The form of the passage as it appears in the introduction may seem almost identical; nevertheless, the playful tone vanishes,

[3] "Overture," *Musical Dictionary. The American History and Encyclopedia of Music*, 1st ed., 1908.
[4] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 141.

and so does the discussion Meredith has with his wife afterwards, in whose course she for example accuses him that in comparison to his writings *he* is a forgery.

‘‘Yes, I am a model poet,’ Meredith was saying [in the overture]. ‘I am pretending to be someone else.’’[5] In this case the destabilising factor of Meredith’s wife is missing in the discourse. The sentence thus changes from one of the quips with which the poet unsuccessfully tries to overcome his wife’s reserve into the one that is without restraint given a more serious meaning and directed at its proper addressee: a fellow artist. Afterwards, Meredith expresses an anxiety about representing a dead poet to which Wallis replies that he will be immortalised. ‘No doubt. But will it be Meredith or will it be Chatterton? I merely want to know,’[6] says Meredith in return. In a while he repeats his question and Wallis answers: ‘There will come a time when even you will not know the difference.’[7] This sentence makes one recall Hillis’s concept of “virus” discussed in the previous chapter.

From one point of view, in this as well as the following instances of self-intertextualisation Ackroyd is the forger of his own text, a forger really in the sense of a skilful employment of craft, ‘the craft of the hand and what passes over the palm.’[8] He may be easily imagined chiselling his text into a truer ornament of the overall intertextual mosaic.

In the form in which it occurs further in the novel the passage featuring Harriet Scrope and her friend Sarah was already quoted in the previous chapter; it involves the misquotation of a particular line from Marlow’s *Doctor Faustus*. The two versions are fairly similar in this case; however, they significantly differ in the reaction that follows Sarah’s reply to the proclamation of Harriet that she had given her life to English literature: ‘“It’s a pity, then, that you didn’t get anything in return.”’ In the version to be found in the text of the novel ‘Harriet

[5] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 2.
[6] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 3.
[7] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 161.
[8] Groom 16.

tried but failed to look "hurt." "I'm supposed to be famous at least."'[9] On the other hand, in the introductory version the two friends simply 'both laughed.'[10]

The last passage portrays Charles's encounter with a young, red-haired man, who is referred to as "one," whereas Charles is referred to as "the other," which represents another piece of evidence to support Charles's being an imitation of Chatterton in the sense that was discussed in the second chapter. In this case the version from the introduction truly represents a most completed one. The young man informs Charles that he is sick and he replies that he knows. In the version to be found in the text the young man says in return: 'Not now, not now. I will come to see you again. Not now.'[11] In the introductory chapter the young man, explicitly called Thomas Chatterton, simply disappears.

3. 3 permutation in reverse

H. F. Plett gives a list of a number of "transformations," that is 'such procedures as transform textuality into intertextuality.'[12] A procedure that might be called "reversed permutation" has an important role in the Part One of *Chatterton*. As Plett puts it, permutation 'breaks a text down into fragments and rearranges these in a different order.'[13] Correspondingly, "reversed permutation" would mean connecting what first appears in the form of fragments into a whole. To be more precise, both procedures thus represent a means of transforming textuality into self-intertextuality – transforming a text into one that relates to other parts of itself.

Each chapter of the Part One is at several places interrupted by an italicised phrase. All together these phrases form a sentence that appears towards the end of a particular chapter; it appears either as a whole or as different parts of it being used in the dialogue of some characters. Such sentences refer to what happens in the chapter, and at the same time some of

[9] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 35.
[10] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 3.
[11] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 47.
[12] Plett 19.

the phrases refer more or less directly to particular places in the text where they find themselves. For example, this is the phrase accompanying the "identification" of old Chatterton in the portrait Charles exchanged for the books on flute playing:

> 'I wonder,' he [Philip] said out loud, 'I wonder who that is? May I?' Quickly he rose from the table and walked over to the painting.
>
> *this is him*
>
> Charles enjoyed telling stories to his son; as soon as he sat on the side of his narrow bed, the words seemed to come easily to him. (...) When eventually he came back into the front room, Philip was looking at the face on the canvas. 'Chatterton,' he said.[14]

Together with two other phrases the above-mentioned italicised words form the last sentence of the chapter: 'Oh yes,' said Charles at last, 'if this is real, this is him.'[15] It is Charles who utters the sentence; does that mean that the first occurrences of the individual parts were "pronounced" in his mind? Who speaks? Is it the author? The broken pieces subsequently connected into sentences may also represent an expression of what Ackroyd himself ascribed to *A Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*: an elusive persona 'located within the contours and recesses of an inherited language'[16] – Ackroyd's attempt to make language speak independently of any particular speaker.

As for the first possible answer, the phrase cannot be unambiguously connected only with Charles; it can be just as easily ascribed to Philip, and concerning the other phrases, it seems rather problematic to determine their particular source. For example, in the following

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[13] Plett 23.
[14] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 21.
[15] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 21.
[16] Ackroyd, *Notes for A New Culture: An Essay on Modernism* 48.

passage the italicised line does not have any immediate meaning that could be related to what is spoken of before and afterwards:

> 'Philip will be here soon,' she [Vivien] said, 'so both of you get ready.'
>
> *if this is real*
>
> Philip Slack stood uncertainly in the middle of the room; he had known Charles for fifteen years (...).[17]

One would indeed not wonder whether Philip's visit is real or not for he pays one to the family every week. As regards the second possible explanation of the origin of the sentences pieced together from the fragments, it has to be said that in *Chatterton* – unlike other authors of metafiction, as for example John Fowles in his *French Lieutenant's Woman* – Ackroyd refrains from interfering in the text directly, neither as an authorial narrator nor as a character.

Thus, it will be argued that the fragments appear to be independent of any speaker (when they are uttered for the first time), and hence 'can create a wealth of tones and meanings by not being definitive in orthodox sense.'[18] The independence of the fragments is most evident in the second chapter of the novel. The text of the chapter is interrupted two times, and in each case by a half of the final sentence of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The purport of the statement is much closer to the one of Wittgenstein's text when it is divided into halves that seem to interrupt the second chapter in a seemingly random way, than when the whole line is put in the mouth of Harriet Scrope in the end of the chapter.

[17] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 17.
[18] Ackroyd, *Notes for a New Culture: An Essay on Modernism* 51.

Harriet was stroking her hair. ‘But didn’t you know? Everything is made up.’

whereof we cannot speak

As soon as Mary had left the house, closing the front door gently behind her, Harriet jumped up and once more found the pop-music station on her radio.[19]

To say that everything is made up, meaning made up by human mind, can be understood as a paraphrase of another statement from the *Tractatus*: ‘What is thinkable is also possible.’[20] Harriet’s turning blind (together with the second half of Wittgenstein’s line) in the following passage may refer to Wittgenstein’s doubts about the existence of a metaphysical subject in the world: ‘*Where in* the world is a metaphysical subject to be noted? You say that this case is altogether like that of the eye and the field of sight. But you do *not* really see the eye. And from nothing *in the field of sight* can it be concluded that it is seen from an eye.‘[21] A metaphysical subject may be noted outside the boundaries of the world, where, nevertheless, perceptive abilities of human beings do not reach, and because of that one can say nothing about it with accuracy. Applied to the case of the fragmentary sentences in the Part One of *Chatterton*, doubts about the existence of a metaphysical subject also lead one back to the discussion of the “speaker” of the fragments.

She turned away from him [a blind man] and, for a moment, she closed her eyes and became blind.

thereof we must be silent

Harriet was standing demurely in the corridor when Sarah Tilt opened the door.[22]

[19] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 28.
[20] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007) 35.
[21] Wittgenstein 89.

On the other hand, when the statement is assigned a definite speaker, that is Harriet, she immediately invests it with her habit of undermining authorities; she uses the statement, as an excuse for not discussing something on the phone: 'What did the ridiculous German say?' she went on. 'Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent?'[23]

3. 3. 1 Charles as a visionary poet

In spite of having somehow determined their source, the problem of how to interpret the sentences still remains to a great degree unresolved. For example, Susana Onega Jaén suggests that they 'synthesize the main stages of what may be described as Charles's process of maturation as a visionary poet.'[24] According to *Macmillian English Dictionary* the word "visionary"[25] has three basic meanings. As regards the one of 'relating to a religious vision,' it certainly applies to Charles; he does not have religious visions, strictly speaking, but certainly supernatural ones - for example he encounters Thomas Chatterton in a vision, or a child with a bird perched on his shoulder. On the other hand, the reader can hardly determine whether to call Charles a "visionary artist;" from Charles's work he or she has a chance to read only the title of the part of a longish poem Charles never finishes ('PART THREE. the bridges of contentment'[26]), which cannot betray much information about Charles's artistic originality. What grasps Charles's visionary characteristic ascribed to him by Onega best is the third sense of the word given by *Macmillian English Dictionary*, which denotes someone 'with clear ideas or hopes of how something should be done or how things will be in the future.' It has to be admitted that Charles is not very much concerned about the future, because he already suspects his end is near; nevertheless, his unquestionably clear thinking and belief that

[22] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 30.
[23] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 36.
[24] Onega Jaén 61.
[25] "Visionary*," Macmillian English Dictionary*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Macmilliam Education, 2002).
[26] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 14.

certain things really matter can be perceived in its prime in the defence of poetry and literature Charles delivers shortly before his death:

> 'And if the poetry doesn't matter, Andrew, why is it that there are people who find their only comfort in reading it? (...) What is it that they find in books which nothing else in the world can show or tell them? (...) And why is it, Andrew, that some people try all their lives to become writers or poets, even though they are too ashamed to show their work to anyone? (...) Where does their dream come from? (...) I'll tell you what it is. It is a dream of wholeness and of beauty. All the yearning and all the unhappiness and all the sickness can be taken by that vision. And the vision is real. I know. I've seen it and I'm sick.'[27]

One of Ackroyd's major interests are so called "Cockney visionaries," the core of whom represents the 'conflation of Blake and Bunyan, Langland and Hogarth.' According to Ackroyd, their work is a '"true key" to the London imagination. To hear the music of the stones, to glimpse the spiritual in the local and the actual, (...) all these are the centre of the London vision.'[28] Hence Ackroyd created his own visionary, whose vision consists neither in mystical images rooted in an idiosyncratic mythology like those of William Blake, nor in magnificent insights into the nature of the whole world. It is firmly connected to the main themes of the novel: artistic creativity, representation and art in general.

[27] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 151-152.
[28] Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* 319.

3. 3. 2 writing as painting

As Linda Hutcheon points out, *Chatterton* is concerned with 'representation in both visual and verbal media;'[29] Charles's wife Vivien for example works in an art gallery, whose proprietor in the course of the novel buys a couple of paintings forged by an assistant of a deceased painter. Harriet's friend Sarah writes a book on the visual representation of death, and there is obviously also the issue of the portraits of Chatterton and "Chatterton." The poet and the visual artist combine in the person of William Blake, whose identity is supposed to be one of Chatterton's disguises in *Chatterton*. Blake used to engrave his poems and to make relief etchings of them. A line from one of his prophetic works (*Four Zoas: Night the Seventh*) is subjected to the procedure of reverse permutation in the fourth chapter of the novel: 'Craving & devouring; but my Eyes are always upon thee, O lovely Delusion!'[30]

Based on the importance of visual representation in *Chatterton*, it will be argued that, taken from a formal point of view, the fragments connected into a sentence at the end of each chapter of the Part One represent also an attempt to partly erase the boundaries between verbal and visual representation: an attempt of visual representation by means of words.

In an essay on abstraction in contemporary writing and painting Malcolm Bradbury discusses Cezanne's 'way both of creating and decreating a portrait, so that it conveyed both the inner energy of the sitter and the outward energy of the creative act (…).'[31] It will be suggested that by interrupting the flow of the text by italicised fragments of certain sentences Ackroyd does something very similar.

First of all, he enriches the text's meaning – as it was demonstrated by the example of Wittgenstein's quote – and helps thus create the text. Simultaneously, he "decreates" the text

[29]Linda Hutcheon, "The Politics of Postmodern Parody," *Intertextualities*, ed. H. F. Plett (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991) 226.
[30] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 60.
[31] Malcolm Bradbury, "Putting in the Person: Character and Abstraction in Current Writing and Painting," *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 18. The Contemporary English Novel*, gen. eds. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (London: Edward Arnold, 1980) 195.

by calling attention visually to its artificial nature. Through the fragments verbal representation is "denaturalised," as Hutcheon puts it, by employing the means of visual representation: spatial distance and a different style of lettering.

Outward energy of the creative act is to be perceived in the very process of reversed permutation: the artisanly adjustment of particular pieces of the text into a different shape. Moreover, it should be stated that even the individual fragments have an energy of their own. Having suggested that they cannot be ascribed to any particular speaker, they should be understood as an expression of the maturation of events in the novel or, as Onega Jaén puts it, the reproduction of the 'whole novel en abyme (...).'[32]

Last but not least, all instances of reversed permutation in the Part One of *Chatterton* represent a *visible* quest for unity: the fragments always become a whole, eventually. However, this whole, ironically, represents another fragment – one sentence, or a quotation from an existing literary text. Moreover, as the discussion of the quote of Wittgenstein demonstrated, the fragments may be sometimes more meaningful than the whole.

[32] Onega Jaén 61.

4. Repetition and Metafiction

4. 1 literary metafiction

What Flint's quoting of Latin lines, the reproduction of Chatterton's portrait in Philip's apartment or Harriet's reworking of Harrison Bentley's plots all have in common is that they call 'to our attention (…) the entire representational process – in a wide range of forms and modes of production (...).'[1] In the first place, the proliferation of numerous kinds of reproduction calls attention to the fact that *every* type of representation consists in repetition, thereby questioning the idea of artistic originality in the sense of Coleridge's "primary imagination." Secondly, the exposure of the representational process constitutes the basic property of literary metafiction, a genre to which *Chatterton* belongs.

The above-mentioned forms of representation concern the novel which thematises them as a whole: it is itself a form of representation and therefore reflected in them. One of the terms used to denote the genre of metafiction is thus the "self-conscious" novel or literature. The basic dimension of its self-reflexivity lies at the very core of the genre: as Patricia Waugh puts it, it is 'constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion.'[2] Waugh's "laying bare" equals Hutcheon's "denaturalising," and both concepts attempt to highlight the fact that literature is a form of discourse, and so are the particular – not necessarily just realist (as it will be shown) – forms of representation.

[1] Hutcheon, "The Politics of Postmodern Parody" 226.

4. 1. 1 embracing secondary imagination

As it was stated, Coleridge's "secondary imagination" in literature works with plots, styles or motives that are already extant. A work of literary metafiction does not just recreate them; while doing so it questions and reconsiders the established forms of representation they constitute.

Thus, in metafiction the critical value of secondary imagination is truly appreciated and given prominence. The godlike power of "primary imagination" is questioned and subverted for a writer of metafiction can 'treat *nothing* as a quasi divinity;' his or her view considers everything, 'our language, our conscience, our community – as a product of time and chance.'[3]

4. 2 historiographic metafiction

Susana Onega Jaén describes *Chatterton* as Ackroyd's 'most metafictional historiographic metafiction.'[4] The label denotes a metafictional novel that draws upon and plays with historical facts. Historiographic metafiction appears to be the embodiment of what 'the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us,' that is that 'both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past (...).'[5] This has a considerable consequence for the perception of reference in historiographic metafiction. As Linda Hutcheon argues, 'The issue is no longer "To what empirically real object in the past does the language of history refer?"; it is more "to which discursive context could this language belong? To which private textualizations must we

[2] Waugh 6.
[3] Richard Rorty, *Contingency of Language* (Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 22.
[4] Onega Jaén 58.
[5] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) 89.

refer?"'[6] Historiographic metafiction therefore clearly 'does not pretend to reproduce events, but to direct us, instead, to facts, or to new directions in which to think about events.'[7]

Another important characteristic of historiographic metafictions is their specific semantic quality. Lubomír Doležel asserts that the authors of postmodern historical novels – historiographic metafictions – profess the inclination towards radically non-essential semantics. In practice it means that they do not refrain from changing even the most fundamental individual characteristics of historical personages, events or locations[8] in the name of a new perspective they want them to be perceived from.

Recognising the specific semantic quality of metafictional novels provides another interpretation not only of certain scenes from *Chatterton* where characters from different time levels meet, but especially of the anachronisms touched upon in the first chapter. It is not just George Meredith who seems to be aware that one lives within "systems of significations" of which none can be given prominence – that would mean creating just another "quasi divinity." Also the character of Thomas Chatterton expresses a similar view: 'Without words, Chatterton thinks, there is nothing. There is no real world.'[9]

4. 3 *Chatterton* as a novel of metafiction

Applying de Saussure's distinction between language-system and language-individual utterance to the definition of metafictional novel, Patricia Waugh states that 'Each metafictional novel self-consciously sets its individual *parole* against the *langue* (the codes and conventions) of the novel tradition.'[10] Ackroyd reacts to such codes on various levels in *Chatterton*. One of these reactions has already been mentioned: the very fact that *Chatterton* is an artistic representation about artistic representation.

[6] Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 115.
[7] Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 154.
[8] Doležel, *Fikce a historie v období postmoderny* 98.
[9] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 210.

On the genre level, as Onega Jaén observed, Ackroyd to some extent follows the conventions of the nineteenth century multi-plot novel: for example the 'omniscient and ubiquitous narrator who (...) weaves into an intricate pattern of relationships a plethora of characters (...).'[11] These characteristics are, however, exposed as purely conventional; *Chatterton* itself for instance – being a metafictional novel – contains a fitting symbol of the feasibility of an omniscient and ubiquitous narrative perspective. In the end, the portrait of "old Chatterton" is examined, and the reader learns that it probably contained numerous underpaintings, which, nevertheless, could not be disclosed. After the application of dissolvent 'the image of the sitter seemed to shudder before beginning to shrivel, to bend, to drop away in flakes of paint which floated down from the canvas onto the tiled floor (...).'[12] The "death" of the portrait resembles the death of Chatterton, who, in his final agony, felt as if he was 'melting, melting, melting.'[13] This link further confirms that for future generations the signs (or representations) of Chatterton are necessarily substituted for the real poet.[14] Moreover, the link alludes to Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, creating thus two intertextual connections – one also to Ackroyd's novel *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde.*

There are two basic metafictional features in *Chatterton* that are not connected with the representation of history. As it was stated, Harriet Scrope began to borrow and rework plots of a Victorian writer Harrison Bentley. The titles of his books bear a certain resemblance to those of the novels Ackroyd had published before *Chatterton*. The first one is called *The Last Testament* alluding to Ackroyd's *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde*. Bentley's plot deals with nothing else than a forgery. A biographer discovers that his subject 'at the end of his life, had been too ill to compose the verses which had brought him eternal fame; that, in

[10] Waugh 11.
[11] Onega Jaén, 60.
[12] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 228.
[13] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 229.
[14] Baudrillard 167.

fact, it had been the poet's wife who had written them for him.'[15] The plot foreshadows the minor character of Stuart Merk who skilfully forges a few pictures supposedly painted by Joseph Seymour, a well-known artist for whom Merk worked as an assistant (and probably had a homosexual relationship with), and sells them to the gallery where Charles's wife works. Moreover, Bentley's plot is reflected in the story of Chatterton's forgery as well as the 1980's level of *Chatterton*: it is revealed that Chatterton's memoirs Charles and Philip discovered were written by the poet's publisher, who had been angry about the fact that after Chatterton's suicide certain letters were published in which he accused the publisher of buying his work cheaply and then abandoning him. The publisher thus, conscious of the power of representation, set out to write the supposed Chatterton's memoirs; 'to fake the work of a faker and so confuse for ever the memory of Chatterton; he would no longer be a poet who died young and glorious, but a middle-aged hack who continued a sordid trade with his partner'[16] – wrote under different names and supplied the resultant works to the publisher. The reader is thus encountered almost with a Droste effect[17] of forgeries and another brutal statement about the impossibility to grasp the past: the 18th century level (its majority is constituted by the "memoirs") of *Chatterton* all of a sudden becomes something else than the reader was thinking throughout the whole novel.

The second novel of Harrison Bentley is called *The Stage Fire*, whereas the name of the first novel Ackroyd wrote is *The Great Fire of London*. The allusion is more complicated than it seems. What is on fire in Ackroyd's novel is exactly a stage, or more precisely, a film set. Moreover, there is another lady holding a box of coca in the title *Stage Fire* itself. It can be understood in two ways: as a stage on fire or as an *imitatio*n of fire for theatrical purposes.

[15] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 69.
[16] Ackroyd, *Chatterton* 221.
[17] 'On the boxes of Droste cocoa there is an image of a nurse carrying a tray with a wholesome cup of hot chocolate and a Droste cocoa; on that box we again see the image at a smaller scale,' and so on. (J. M. Aarts, *Plain and Solid Geometry*, trans. Reiner Erné (New York: Springer Science+Business media, LLC, 2008) 87.). See the Picture 2.

Ackroyd makes the number of forgeries proliferate even further when he creates his own "meta-forgery" of Chatterton's death. Ackroyd's version seems to be more probable as well as more grotesque than the officially established one: Chatterton, eagerly exploring the riches of the capital, contracts a minor veneric disease, and while mixing himself a cure, he confuses the portions of laudanum and arsenic. Last but not least, the scene of his death does not indeed resemble the sublime moment presented by Wallis's painting – it realistically depicts a death of poison.

4. 4 the function of metafiction

The repeated self-referentiality of *Chatterton* has neither merely ornamental function, nor that of an 'academic play or some infinite regress into textuality.'[18] However, even these can be taken into question. Linking Darwinian concept of "fitness factors" with human perception of art, Denis Dutton emphasises our preference for delicate, elaborate things that, according to him, represent simply 'extension of innate, spontaneous Pleistocene values, feeling and attitudes.'[19] He states that one admires in art the qualities similar to those that played their role in the process of sexual selection. *Chatterton*, with its witty exchanges of quotes, and especially multiple forgeries reflecting each other and including also Ackroyd's own version of Chatterton's death, is an elaborate and complex work of literature, and it would indeed satisfy the desire for the above-mentioned chracteristics.

However, as it was stated, metafictional novels possess above all an immense potential to be critical. As Patricia Waugh argues, 'Metafiction explicitly lays bare the conventions of realism; it does not ignore or abandon them.'[20] Whether "realism" should be understood in the sense of the particular artistic epoch, in the case of *Chatterton* the definition needs to be broadened. That is, *Chatterton* partly "lays bare" for example also the conventions of

[18] Hutcheon, "The Politics of Postmodern Parody" 226.

Romanticism, as the comparison of Wallis's and Ackroyd's representation of Chatterton's death shows.

When discussing the "de-naturalisation" of the conventions of realism in *Chatterton*, it should be stated that realism 'has an aesthetic and cognitive dimension neither of which can be wholly separated one from the other.'[21] The first one denotes the realist way of representation, based on a number of features, such as the usage of typified characters. The genre of historiographic metafiction on the other hand, 'espouses a postmodern ideology of plurality and recognition of difference; "type" has little function here,' except for the "denaturalising" one, 'except as something to be ironically undercut.'[22] The three central characters of poets in *Chatterton* do represent a "type;" however, one of the novel's major aims is to show how such a type comes into being. Chatterton is displayed as a *simulacrum* of a young tragic poet by calling attention to the various forms of representation that made him their subject: from "the marvellous boy" of Wordsworth and the portrait by Henry Walis to Ackroyd's novel – ironically.

As for the cognitive dimension of realism, it should be stated that it 'is associated with the secular and rational forms of knowledge that constitute the tradition of the Enlightenment' with its 'optimistic belief that human beings can adequately reproduce, by means of verbal and visual representation, both the objective world that is exterior to them and their own subjective responses to that exteriority.'[23] The chief critical potential of a metafictional novel consists in denaturalising exactly this optimistic belief and to what such a belief may lead one. It 'signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference.'[24] It deconstructs the

[19] Dutton 175.
[20] Waugh 18.
[21] Morris 9.
[22] Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* 114.
[23] Morris 9.
[24] Hutcheon, "The Politics of Postmodern Parody" 225.

representations: for example, it puts an emphasis on the fact that the portrait of dying Thomas Chatterton does not exactly remind one how the poet died – it reminds one of how he was perceived in the nineteenth century, of the aesthetic conventions of the time, and the like.

5. Conclusion

5. 1 the original and the derivative

In the first chapter a question was posed: whether the original and the derivative represent a classic binary opposition in *Chatterton*. The wide usage of repetition in the novel was revealed to highlight the textuality (in the sense of Waugh's 'condition of artifice'[1]), intertextuality and self-intertextuality of *Chatterton* – in particular through references to other texts, the novel's self-referentiality, but also the applying of the means of visual representation (as it was shown in the third chapter).

By showing its dependence on particular artistic and textual representations, repetition calls attention to the fact that for example also history could be considered a textual construct. Going back to the initial discussion of the opposition between the original and the derivative, it should be mentioned, as John Frow states, that it is exactly the metaphor of textuality what has a power to overcome 'the dichotomisation of the real to the symbolic, or the base to the superstructure, or the social to the cultural,'[2] or the original to the derivative.

The subversiveness of embracing the metaphor of textuality goes beyond the one of a forger, counterfeiter or plagiarist. Their works, as Ruthven puts it, 'exhibit a carnivalesque irreverence towards the sanctity of various conventions designed to limit what is permissible in literary production.'[3] However, their irreverence is straightforward – they defy the law. On the other hand, as it was already discussed, highlighted textuality and metafictional nature of Ackroyd's novel subverts more general rules: literary conventions,

[1] Waugh 4.
[2] Frow 47.
[3] Ruthven 4.

established notions of history, or, generally, the possibility of any ideas that would be entirely objective.

For instance, it is significant that the central mystery of the novel remains unresolved: we do not learn the identity of the figure in the portrait claimed to picture old Chatterton. Therefore, there is no piece of evidence to support the assertion of Mr. Joynson that the supposed Chatterton's memoirs are a forgery of his publisher. Given his manner of speech and his grotesque appearance, Mr. Joynson does not seem to be the most reliable of speakers. An objectively valid conclusion is not attained.

The chief value of repetition in *Chatterton* thus stems from its emphasis on the textuality of the novel; in general, it consists in its defiance of what Richard Rorty calls "quasi divinities." They have been discussed throughout the whole thesis, and could be described as the conventions that were given a transcendental status. Apart from the notions of objective knowledge and objectively understandable past, they would include for example ascribing divine creative power to an artist who, nevertheless, because of the very fact that he or she uses 'language, exploits certain genres, and operates within certain literary traditions and with certain conceptual and poetic conventions,'[4] together with his or her invention inevitably elaborates also on the other's texts, while writing. Ackroyd made this fact explicit by placing writerly characters into a heavily intertextual novel. Charles Wychwood, the only one of them who sees himself as a Romantic genius, dies in the end.

The proliferation of various kinds of repetition in Ackroyd's novel does not negate the existence of originality as such; instead, it aims at reconsidering the idea of originality, as it was already discussed in more detail – together with the concept of secondary imagination – in the fourth chapter. Repetition in *Chatterton* thus does not attempt to annul the opposition between the original and the derivative; it stresses the significance of

determining what exactly is assumed under the concepts occupying its poles, and the necessity not to put any of them on a pedestal.

[4] Bennet 71.

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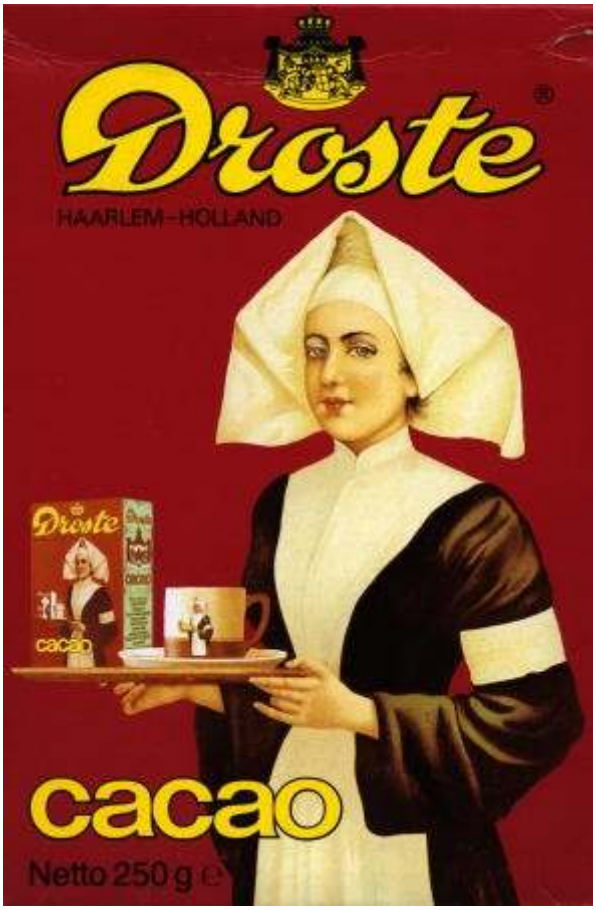
Apendix

Picture 1: *The Death of Chatterton* by Henri Wallis, 1856. (Tate Gallery).



Picture 2: An advertisment for Droste Cacao; by Johannes (Jan) Musset, 1903.